



Legislation Text

File #: 0048X-2021, **Version:** 1

To Express Support for the Expansion of Passenger Rail Services in Ohio and Extension of New Passenger Rail Services via Columbus and to Encourage Congressional Action to Authorize and Appropriate Funds for the Expansion

WHEREAS, Ohio sees only 32 passenger trains per week and has far fewer intercity passenger rail services than any of its neighboring states except Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, Columbus is the nation's most populous city without any fixed rail service and the second most populous city without Amtrak service; and

WHEREAS, Ohio, the seventh most populous state, has the 27th highest Amtrak ridership state and has the lowest ratio of Amtrak riders per resident of the top 10 most populous states; and

WHEREAS, among the top-10 most populous states near Ohio, the number of Amtrak riders per 1,000 residents is 42 in Michigan, 186 in Illinois, 258 in Pennsylvania, and 322 in New York compared to just 6 Amtrak riders per 1,000 residents in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, Ohio is the most populous state without any ongoing passenger rail development or operating program as it has no funds budgeted for passenger rail development in the currently proposed Ohio Department of Transportation biennial budget, making it the sixth such biennial budget in a row with no funding for passenger rail planning, development, or operations; and

WHEREAS, Columbus, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, and other public and private partners continue to advance the Rapid Speed Transportation Initiative, which is evaluating and planning for new intercity passenger rail and hyperloop connections to Chicago, Lima, and Pittsburgh and demonstrates the benefits, market, and viability of such intercity connections to other Ohio cities and regions as well as the Midwest megaregion; and

WHEREAS, Columbus had passenger rail service to Chicago and Pittsburgh until 1979 when service was terminated, and the restoration of the Chicago-Columbus-Pittsburgh passenger rail route would connect over 15 million residents; and

WHEREAS, the restoration of passenger rail service via Columbus to Dayton, Cincinnati, and Cleveland would directly connect Ohio's four largest metropolitan areas with over 7 million residents; and

WHEREAS, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan calls for the establishment of new intercity connections via Columbus as a regional transportation priority for sustainability, equity, and community access; and

WHEREAS, safe, fast, modern, convenient passenger rail service offers time-savings and productivity benefits, making Ohio a more attractive place to live, work, and to visit for business or pleasure; and

WHEREAS, the people of Columbus would benefit from the transportation access afforded by new passenger rail connections to other cities and regions; and

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

That the City of Columbus expresses support for the renewal of the five-year federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization in 2021 that includes Amtrak's proposed Corridors Development Program authorized at \$25 billion for capital improvements and \$300 million for operations over five years; That the City of Columbus encourages the Columbus congressional delegation to provide in the upcoming Transportation and Housing Urban Development appropriations bill \$5 billion for capital improvements and \$60 million for operations to fund Amtrak's New Corridor Development Program; That the City of Columbus express support to Amtrak, the Ohio Department of Transportation, and the Ohio Rail Development Commission for the inclusion of restored passenger rail service in the Cleveland-Columbus-Dayton-Cincinnati corridor in Amtrak's New Corridor Development Program and related federal and state transportation plans; and that the City encourages Amtrak, the Ohio Department of Transportation, and the Ohio Rail Development Commission to include new passenger rail service in the Chicago-Lima-Columbus-Pittsburgh corridor in Amtrak's New Corridor Development Program and related federal and state transportation plans.